U. S. Establishes Computer Security Center

Gaithersburg, Md.—The Defense Dept. has created a new center to evaluate the intrinsic security of different computer architectures for sensitive applications in the Defense Dept. and intelligence community where each user's access to material must be limited to the security level for which that person has been cleared.

Establishment of the new computer security evaluation center at the National Security Agency was announced here at a conference on computer security by Adm. B. R. Inman, who approved the new function when he was director of NSA. Inman now is deputy director for central intelligence.

Inman said that some but not all of the findings of the center's technical evaluations will be made public and gave the rationale for the government's guidelines on making computer security techniques available to non-government users.

The government will continue to encourage computer manufacturers to develop architectures and techniques to enhance the security of their commercial products so the government can use these products wherever possible, he said.

"But sensitive portions of the systems and the known vulnerabilities that remain must be protected in the interest of both government and the manufacturer," Inman said. "It is quite likely, therefore, that the most sensitive portions of the center's analysis will be both classified and proprietary to the manufacturer," he said.

According to Inman, the new center "will not make general product endorsements" and the reports it issues will be for use only by the Defense Dept. and intelligence community.

However, a list of the relative standing of different computer manufacturers' security techniques "may be available publicly to provide both incentive and encouragement for manufacturers in developing 'trusted systems' and for private sector users to employ," Inman said.

"Because of the wide range of sensitive environments that exist for information systems, ranging from privacy applications to compartmentalization within the intelligence community, it will be vital for the evaluated products list to offer a range of technical categories and appropriate environments for specific systems," Inman said.

He said that while the new center is an important step toward advancing the security of computer systems, it will be necessary for Defense Dept. and intelligence community personnel "to become aware of and properly employ procedures for development of 'trusted systems' applications."

George Cotter of NSA has been named director of the new education center and USAF Col. Roger Schell will be the deputy director.